In contrast, the present claims recite a composition comprising a photocured epoxy component. The present claims present compositions which may be melt processed without premature cure. (Specification at page 6, lines 1-6). This result is demonstrated in Example 4 of the present invention. (Specification at pp. 23-24). As a result, the present claims provide the formation of melt-blown microfibers and the construction of non-woven webs. (Specification at page 14, line 27 – page 16, line 3.).

Since this rejection can only be maintained by use of impermissible hindsight, it should be withdrawn and claims 3-6, 11-14 and 17-20 should be allowed.

Claims 1, 2, 7-10, 15 and 16 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as purportedly unpatentable over either of J.P. Derwent Absts. XP002118059 ('059 reference) or XP002118060 ('060 reference).

The '060 reference purports to disclose "A self-adhesive moulding sealing material". Applicants previously challenged the Examiner's assertion that this is known to be identical with a pressure-sensitive adhesive, and ask that the Examiner cite a reference in support of this assertion. MPEP §2144.03.

The present invention concerns a selection of compositions containing a thermoplastic polymer having substantially *no epoxy-binding functions or ester functions*, a tackifier, and an epoxy component comprising a *photocured epoxy*. The present specification teaches that this selection of thermoplastic polymers provides improved extrusion properties. (Specification at p. 3, lns. 16-27.) This improved property is relevant to formation of a non-woven web of blown microfibers, discussed *supra*. The '060 reference does not teach this selection.

The '060 reference teaches the use of numerous thermoplastics having epoxy-binding functions or ester functions, such as polyvinyl acetate and polyester thermoplastics in addition to ethylene/butadiene and polybutadiene rubbers. Thus the '060 reference teaches away from the selection of polymers having substantially no epoxy-binding functions or ester functions. The '060 reference nowhere teaches or suggests an adhesive adapted for use in forming a non-woven web of blown microfibers.

The '060 reference apparently teaches the addition of an uncured epoxy resin, noting that the addition of a curing agent is optional. In contrast, the present invention requires cured epoxy. Examples 1-3 demonstrate that the addition of a cured epoxy provided improved shear strength with some loss of peel strength; however, the use of a cured epoxy reduced the loss of peel strength.

The '059 reference purports to disclose a "heat-sensitive adhesive" comprising a "thermal-hardening agent." The '060 reference purports to disclose compositions comprising a "thermosetting resin." In contrast, the present claims recite a composition comprising a *photocured epoxy* component. As a result, the precursor to the claimed composition can be melt processed without premature cure, as discussed *supra*. The cited references do not teach or suggest a composition comprising a photocured epoxy component, nor do they teach the advantages of such a composition.

In summary, the rejection of claims 1, 2, 7-10, 15 and 16 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) has been overcome and should be withdrawn.

In view of the above, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. Reconsideration of the application is requested. Allowance of claims 1-20 at an early date is solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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